

## **GONE GIRL**

**By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.**



*Gone Girl* is an intense psychological portrait of a couple whose marriage is undergoing the sort of metamorphosis that is all too realistically disturbing. Marriage is a complicated arrangement between people who build upon their initial attraction to each other. If the builders are good and the foundation is solid, happiness is lasting. If the contractors are not committed to the task, then at times it can drift into a love-hate relationship.

From the original chemical sparks come real life, full of all of the mundane daily routine events that living with the same person can bring. For some, the relationship deepens. While for others, insecurities and incompatible personality traits overshadow the original fragile bonds. When the wife in this seemingly perfect-looking pair disappears, the search for what happened leads to some very inconvenient and unravelling truths. Ben Affleck as Nick Dunne gives a great performance as the husband and the prime suspect. How he reacts to the situation is fascinating to watch. Rosamund Pike is a chilling ice queen as Amy Dunne.

As the details of their personal lives begin to unravel in the form of flashbacks, you can clearly see where things went south. There are no victims here. Only two people who were made for each other and how that affects them over time. *Gone Girl* challenges the definitions of love, devotion, loyalty and, in a most disturbing way, proposes that we get the person we deserve. I did not read the book so I can't compare the two. The film, however, is a stark portrayal of how far people will go in the name of love. There is a lot of morality to consider in this story and some jaw-dropping moments; a good ride if you have the tendency to be jaded.

If, on the other hand, you believe that marriage should be hearts, flowers and romance, prepare yourself to be shaken out of your comfort zone. This is not a fun movie to watch. It is, however, a well done and well written discourse on the fragile state of affairs that marriage can be. I hope it is the exception and not the rule, but the newspapers and television are filled with similar cautionary tales. Lovers beware.

The takeaway from all of this is simply that you never know who you are living with, and vice-versa. What human beings are capable of – given certain circumstances – never ceases to amaze me. The volumes of domestic violence reports are filled with horror stories. Frequently, truth is stranger than fiction and strange fiction often carries a large measure of truth. So, if you like suspense stories and are not afraid to look at the darker side of love, then *Gone Girl* will not disappoint.

I give *Gone Girl* four weddings.

